

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBUL #2462/01 2331526
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 211526Z AUG 09
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1008
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 7841
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3845
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

UNCLAS KABUL 002462

DEPT FOR AFGHAN ELECTIONS TASK FORCE

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: Afghan Elections Situation Report Fourteen - 2000 Local,
August 21, 2009

11. (U) This is the final sitrep in the series.

Atmospherics

12. (U) General updates

The IEC rejected claims of a President Karzai victory in the Xinhua press and stressed that any predictions about election results announced by any person or organization were inaccurate. Today in a Tolo interview, President Karzai's media representative, Waheed Omar, also backtracked from previous statements made by President Karzai's campaign manager Din Mohammad declaring a President Karzai victory. He noted while the assessments by their polling agents showed them to be in the lead and gave them confidence that they would emerge victorious, only the IEC could declare the winner of the elections. He also noted that predictions that a second round would not take place was in their interest and acknowledged that this decision could only be made after the IEC announcement of the results. IRI released its preliminary statement on the elections at 1830 Kabul time. In summary, IRI noted many positive aspects of the 2009 elections so far, including a vigorous and relatively civil campaign, balanced private media coverage and, in the first Afghan run election, competent election administration. IRI commended Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) for the training of election workers and ensuring procedures for an orderly election process were in place. However, they said that such issues as lower turnout, fraud and abuse of state resources may have brought these elections to a lower standard than the 2004 and 2005 Afghan elections observed by IRI. In particular, IRI stated that the security environment in the run-up to and on Election Day contributed to Afghans' fear of going to the polls and would need to be addressed if future elections are to gain greater legitimacy. Nevertheless, given Afghanistan's circumstances, and based on what IRI observers witnessed in the first three of the five parts of the elections, IRI concluded that the process so far has been credible.

The National Military Coordination Center (NMCC), which was the epicenter for security coordination for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), reported that all security leaders present, international and Afghan, agreed that despite the high level of attacks throughout the day, the unprecedented levels of security cooperation between ISAF and ANSF had a large positive impact on the ability of security forces to thwart the enemies effort to disrupt the election. BG Hogg HQ ISAF said that election day had seen the highest number of ISAF security incidents ever but that very few of them affected the election process." NDS director Saleh emphasized that the Afghan people took a courageous stand in voting despite the violence of this year. "The enemy attacked today" he said, "but did

not break the people." 3. (U) Provincial reports by region follow:

RC South:

-- The PRT rep in Kandahar reported on his conversation with US-funded Democracy International (DI) observers, who were the only international observers to visit polling stations in Kandahar City. Based on the lack of activity at the 17 polling stations visited and discussions with election officials who were tallying votes, the DI observers would be surprised if voter turnout exceeded 10 to 15 per cent. DI said there were inconsistent reports about the number of polling stations open in Kandahar City yesterday; they heard as many as 73 and as few as 63. Voters seemed to get in, vote, and get out quickly; many covered their faces as they left. Inside the 17 polling stations visited by DI, Karzai supporters were engaged in active campaigning and, at several, greeted the DI team as if they (the Karzai agents) were election officials. Some Karzai agents also interrupted DI's interviews of voters who had already cast their ballots. DI did not observe anyone being prevented from voting or directly observe fraud. Voting appeared to tail off in the afternoon, perhaps due to the ongoing rocket attacks in the city.

The DI observers met with the Chief of Police this morning. The Chief appeared happy and relaxed, and said he'd received a congratulatory call from "Kabul" on his handling of the elections. The Chief denied any real concern about unrest if there were a run-off, saying there would be trouble only if Abdullah Abdullah's supporters took to the streets (NB: a highly unlikely scenario in Pashtun Kandahar). The Chief did not seem concerned about the transport of ballot materials to the IEC.

RC-East:

-- PRT Ghanzi: Governor Usmani called PRT State Rep and expressed his gratitude for all the work the PRT did to ensure that the

elections went off.

He said he had told President Karzai earlier in the day what the U.S. had done to help in Ghazni province. Karzai, he said, was very happy. The Governor said that Ghazni Provincial Election Officer Rahimi and his staff were, at that moment, very busy "counting the votes," and claimed that when he last spoke to Rahimi, the latter told him that Karzai already had more than 200,000 votes. The Governor said that the situation in Ghazni City was returning to normal and that people were out on the streets. He anticipated that there would be no more fighting on the scale that was seen on Election Day.

RC North:

-- Nothing new to report.

RC West:

-- Nothing new to report.

RC Central:

-- Nothing new to report.

Security

15. (U) Provincial reports by region follow:

RC South: Uruzgan: PEO Osmani reported that they are investigating a few instances of voting irregularities, particularly in connection with Provincial Council elections. He also reported that as many as five of the PC candidates had gathered in front of polling stations in Tarin Kowt for some last minute campaigning, despite the ban on such activity

RC East:

-- Nothing new to report.

RC North:

-- PRT Mazar: PRT has confirmed and added detail to brief report of IEC Chairman Lodin to Ambassador Carney at mid-day that an attack in Balkh had killed an IEC worker driving ballot boxes to Mazar. PRT reports that at 22:45 last night, an IEC convoy transporting ballot boxes from Shahraq village in Nahr-e-Shahi district, Balkh province, to Mazar was attacked by insurgents, who first fired RPGs at and then doused fuel on an IEC vehicle. One IEC worker was killed, and thirteen ballot boxes were burned. The ANP escort was at the rear of the convoy.

RC West:

-- Herat: According to the Provincial ANP Chief, there were no security incidents of note in Herat province the day after the election. He claimed on Election Day Herat city was the quietest, safest major city in Afghanistan. Traffic was very light this Friday and fewer shops were open than usual for a Friday, but by evening, the normal pace of activity for a Friday in Herat seemed to have resumed. Many Heratis, mostly young men, and a few families, were out picnicking in parks around town Friday afternoon.

RC Central:

-- Nothing new to report.

Voting & Counting Activities

16. (U) Provincial reports by region follow:

RC South:

-- Uruzgan: PRT Tarin Kowt reports that PEO Osmai did not have any specific voter turnout statistics but did confirm that the voting in some districts was abysmally low, and noted that in at least four districts there few to zero women voters. He attributed low voter turnout to the Taliban propaganda campaign, particularly in those areas where there was both low voter turnout and yet no security issues.

RC East:

-- PRT Ghanzi: The election materials from Rashidan district were brought to FOB Ghazni by US military air, and turned over to the IEC. They were then loaded onto IEC trucks, which drove to the local IEC headquarters in Ghazni City with an ANP escort. The two District Field Coordinators told us 2,000 people voted, which they said is 10 percent of the eligible voters of Rashidan district.

District Subgovernor (DSG) Mohammad Hassan Faizi and his two bodyguards were brought to the base on the helicopter, as were the five District Field Coordinators and the body of a dead ANA soldier.

DSG Faizi said that his clothes were shot through during fighting at the Zana Khan District Center with AAF that had surrounded the center. One of the DFCs said that 60 percent of Zana Khan's eligible voters voted, amounting to 18,000 people. When challenged by the IEC interpreter who reminded the DFC that there was "a war in Zanakhan," the DFC quickly downgraded his estimate to 8,000 voters and 15 percent.

Panjshir: The Provincial Election Officer in Panjshir said he is unable to assess voter turnout at this time. Anecdotal evidence from international observers suggests voter turnout was less than 50 percent - surprising given the permissive security environment and active campaigning by provincial council candidates.

The Provincial Election Office has received tally sheets from 52 of Panjshir's 96 voting centers. All but the most remote polling stations are expected to transport their materials to the PEO by the end of the day.

Logar / Wardak: Throughout the 142 polling stations in Logar and

Wardak, ballots from 132 polling centers have been counted, signed, and transported from the PC to the DC. The remaining 10 which are from Azra and Kherwar in Logar have also been transported from the PC to the DC but we did not gain confirmation that they were properly counted and signed, but assum they were.

As of 1500, no ballots present at the PC have transported to Kabul. All movement has been carried out by the IEC.

RC North:

-- PRT Kunduz: Provincial Elections Officer told us ballots and tally sheets for four districts are arriving at the IEC warehouse in Kunduz today; materials for the other three districts would arrive tomorrow.

RC West:

-- Herat: Accor it will undermine the legitimacy of the elections.

--VOA reported that 10 Taliban fighters and an ANA soldier were killed during fighting Friday night in the Sar Arzi district of Paktika province. Meanwhile, two people were killed in two separate incidents in the province.

--BBC reported on the statement by Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Quraishi in which he said his country wants a stable and peaceful Afghanistan. He added that Pakistan is ready to work with the new Afghan government.

--Tolo TV reported on remarks by Hanif Atmar, Minister of Interior, and Amrullah Saleh, Director of National Security. They said efforts to disrupt the elections were orchestrated on the other side of the border (an apparent reference to Pakistan). Amrullah Saleh said Afghan security forces prevented a number of incidents during the election day in various parts of the country.

EIKENBERRY

RC North:

-- Nothing new to report.

RC West:

-- Nothing new to report.

RC Central:

-- Nothing new to report.

Public Affairs

18. (U) NEW MESSAGING: Nothing new to report.

19. (U) AFGHAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS:

AFGHAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

--Presidential candidate Ashraf

Ghani Ahmadzai said there have been

reports of vote rigging and that election results will not be legitimate unless IEC addressed all the complaints.

--Rival presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah said there has been vote rigging in some parts of the country, especially Kandahar and southern parts of the country. He expressed hope that all complaints will be investigated.

--IEC confirmed that it has so far received around 100 complaints in Kabul and that investigation into complaints of vote rigging and irregularities has started.

--Tolo TV reported that people under the age of 18 took part in voting in some provinces. An MP called this a clear violation of the law and said it will undermine the legitimacy of the elections.

--VOA reported that 10 Taliban fighters and an ANA soldier were killed during fighting Friday night in the Sar Arzi district of Paktika province. Meanwhile, two people were killed in two separate incidents in the province.

--BBC reported on the statement by Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Quraishi in which he said his country wants a stable and

peaceful Afghanistan. He added that Pakistan is ready to work with the new Afghan government.

--Tolo TV reported on remarks by Hanif Atmar, Minister of Interior, and Amrullah Saleh, Director of National Security. They said efforts to disrupt the elections were orchestrated on the other side of the border (an apparent reference to Pakistan). Amrullah Saleh said Afghan security forces prevented a number of incidents during the election day in various parts of the country.

EIKENBERRY